

## DEQ staff aids Habitat for Humanity

As an occupation, Department of Environmental Quality staff work toward protecting the habitats of Michigan's natural resources. In their spare time, however, they also work toward improving the homes in their local communities. This past summer, DEQ employees volunteered to build houses with Habitat for Humanity during events organized in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Bay County and Lansing.



Bay City DEQ employee Doug Morse works on the frame of the Habitat home in his community.

Kalamazoo district office employee Bree Bennett helped organize a work event hanging trusses and gables at a Habitat house. She was among nine DEQ workers to volunteer at the event.

"This is my first experience with Habitat," Bennett said. "To be a part of a group that helps put a roof over a family's head, literally, was a very rewarding experience. I learned a skill that I never would have dreamed of taking on myself."

Six DEQ workers from the Bay City office attended the June Habitat project. Saginaw Bay district office employee Michael Young, also a first-time participant, volunteered in the work group that framed walls and built a deck for the home.

"It's a great way to get to know the people you work with," Young said. "Any group of individuals that want to grow as a team can benefit from volunteering for Habitat."

Other employees have been previously involved with Habitat for Humanity. Grand Rapids district office employee Chris Christensen has volunteered for more than eight years with the organization, including volunteer work in Brazil. The Grand Rapids

project put siding on a Habitat project along with thirteen other DEQ employees. Christensen credited encouragement from DEQ

management for getting him involved

"I think it is great that our Director and Governor encourage us to build relationships in our communities," Christensen said. "Poverty and the need for decent, affordable housing have no political boundaries. The relationships with the homeowners and your co-workers are the most important things that are built on Habitat worksites."

> Please see page 2 for more photos.



A longtime volunteer, Grand Rapids district office employee Chris Christensen employs his skills during the summer projects.





Habitat for Humanity  
DEQ employees  
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